

Specimen Crowd Management Policy

Denver Police Department Operations Manual

100.00 - Patrol Division and General Procedures

108.00 - Emergency Procedure Plan

108.08 Crowd Management Policy

(1) Policy

a. The Denver Police Department policy regarding crowd management is to apply the appropriate level of direction and control to protect life and property, maintain public peace and order and to uphold constitutional rights of free speech and assembly.

(2) General Principles

a. The Denver Police Department will seek to improve its ability to manage crowd control events through study of its past experiences and evaluation of incidents occurring in other jurisdictions. Training in crowd management is crucial and shall be an ongoing process. The department's philosophy is to fine-tune procedures and training in order to improve preparation for and response to future events. Consistent with this philosophy a manual will be developed to address various scenarios that may arise in crowd control situations, as well as options for dealing with them.

b. Though no single method of dealing with crowds can be universally effective, the principle of establishing contact and communication with the crowd will be embraced by the Denver Police Department.

When dealing with planned events, frequent meetings with sponsors and group leaders are encouraged. In unplanned events, when possible uniformed officers will attempt contact with the group. Despite this philosophy, it is understood that some situations are not conducive to conciliation, and immediate control procedures must be employed. Incident Commanders have the responsibility and discretion to evaluate a situation and act accordingly.

c. Police personnel must maintain professional demeanor, despite unlawful or anti-social behavior on the part of crowd members. Unprofessional police behavior can inflame a tense situation and make control efforts more difficult and dangerous. Strong supervision and command are essential to maintaining unified, measured and effective police response. A team work-based response with strong leadership is key to maintaining

control and safety. Impulsive actions by involved officers are to be avoided.

d. Identification of areas where the crowd is to be located should be done as soon as possible.

Rather than trying to move a large crowd, it is better to place them in the proper location from the start of an event. When possible, police officers should be at their posts well in advance of arriving citizens.

e. Lines of control should be established, especially in events that involve protestors. Whenever possible, hostile factions should be separated.

f. Considering the type of crowd involved is an important factor in responding properly to its behavior. Crowds may vary from cooperative or celebratory, to non-compliant and hostile or combative.

(3) Definitions

a. Command Post:

An area designated for the overall control and management of a particular event or incident. Generally it should be within a short distance of the incident, but not within view of crowd participants, or so close as to be adversely affected by the event. Senior ranking officers shall be stationed at the command post. When possible, the Incident Commander will manage an incident from the command post, but is not precluded from responding to the scene to observe the event.

b. Crowd Management:

Techniques used to manage lawful public assemblies before and during the event for the purpose of maintaining their lawful status. This can be accomplished in part through coordination with event planners and group leaders, permit monitoring, and past event critiques.

c. Crowd Control:

Techniques used to address unlawful public assemblies, including a display of formidable numbers of police officers, crowd containment, dispersal tactics, (Field Force and Mobile Field Force), and arrest procedures, (isolated events or mass arrests).

d. Incident Commander:

The ranking officer at the scene or en route is responsible to take command of the

incident. The Incident Commander (IC) retains overall control of the scene until an announcement over the police radio that a higher-ranking officer is assuming command. Any officer who assumes command must be either present, at the command post, or en route. Personnel responding from other districts, bureaus and units are under the direction and control of the Incident Commander.

e. Inner Perimeter:

A line of control established to contain a crowd or special event to facilitate order maintenance, crowd control and public safety.

f. Outer Perimeter:

The area surrounding the inner perimeter that provides pedestrian and vehicular traffic ingress, egress and parking.

g. Planned Event Coordinator:

A police officer generally of supervisory or command rank designated to plan and coordinate crowd management tasks for a given event. This officer may also serve as an advisor or commander.

h. Spontaneous Event or Incident:

An unplanned or unforeseen event or incident that may create a risk to public safety, peace and order, or damage to property. Such incidents may include but are not limited to crowd disorders, incidents at schools, transportation accidents, bombings, explosions, disasters, major fires, labor disputes, celebratory crowds and organized protests.

i. Scheduled Event:

An activity involving large numbers of people that requires a permit or is planned and publicized beforehand. Such occurrences may include but are not limited to parades, concerts, religious gatherings, parties, community activities, sporting events, and demonstrations.

j. Staging Area:

A site selected for the staging of police and emergency personnel. Generally, it should be a short distance from the incident, but ideally not within view of the crowd or event participants. It should allow sufficient space for cars, equipment, personnel, and security.

(4) Responsibilities of Planned Event Coordinator

a. Gather and analyze information about future crowd events, including review of

information from both internal and external sources.

b. Coordinate with the city permit department and various police department sections, including divisions, districts, bureaus, and special units to prepare for a planned special event.

c. Meet in advance with event sponsors and group leaders to exchange information and to present the police department's philosophy and intent. Details of the department plan and preparation shall not be disclosed except when necessary to ensure success of the operation.

d. Coordinate affected divisions, districts, bureaus, and special units to prepare an operational plan for a given event that details assignments, traffic and crowd flow, communications, tactics and training.

e. Ensure that appropriate equipment is available.

f. Provide periodic updates to middle and/or senior command staff regarding the status of an upcoming crowd event.

g. If present at the scene of a crowd event, evaluate the potential for violence and/or unlawful behavior.

h. Gather post-event information from the affected department divisions, districts, units, and bureaus. Prepare a written critique of the police department's preparation and performance in a given crowd event, including a breakdown of expenses. Present findings and recommendations regarding policies, procedures, training and expenses.

i. Maintain records of the police department's response to crowd events with the intent to revise and fine-tune policies, procedures and training. When appropriate, arrange for the use of videotape equipment to record crowd behavior and police response.

j. Provide or recommend and arrange training as needed to various sections of the police department.

(5) Responsibilities of Incident Commander

a. The senior ranking officer in the district shall respond to the scene of spontaneous events when practical, and take command of the incident. This person will be the Incident Commander (IC) until relieved by a higher-ranking officer. The IC shall declare over the police radio that he or she is in command. When practical, a command post shall be established as soon as possible.

b. The IC of planned events shall be responsible for the overall coordination of the event, as well as crowd control.

c. The IC and supervisors shall make every effort to ensure that the police response does not exacerbate the situation. The police response will be commensurate with the overall threat if any, to public safety, order maintenance, life and property. The least police intervention needed to address a particular incident shall be deemed most appropriate. This does not preclude police officers from taking appropriate action to direct crowd and vehicular movement, enforce ordinances and statutes and employ the physical force necessary to maintain the safety of the public and emergency personnel.

d. An immediate assessment of the situation is essential for effective police response. The Incident Commander must ascertain the following information at the earliest possible time.

1. The location and type of event
2. Are a large number of the crowd participants behaving unlawfully?
3. Are there a limited number of specific individuals engaged in unlawful conduct?
4. Is there a likelihood that the unlawful behavior will spread to other crowd participants?
5. Immediate threats to the safety of the public and/or police officers
6. The structure or vehicle(s) involved
7. The size of the involved area
8. The number of additional officers and police resources needed as well as requirements
 1. for specialized units (Traffic, Metro/SWAT, Gang Bureau, etc.)
9. The manner of response (Code 9 or 10)
10. Location for a Staging Area
11. Location for a Command Post
12. Location for a media staging area controlled by a P.I.O. or designee.
13. Ingress and egress routes
14. Additional resources needed (paramedic, fire department, barricades, sheriff's buses, command post van, etc.)

e. Purported First Amendment activities will be evaluated by the Incident Commander, to determine lawfulness of the actions by groups and individuals. Specifically, actions and

speech protected by the First Amendment include such things as rallies, marches, parades, and leafleting. Actions or behavior which involve trespassing, destruction of property, disruption of transportation, unlawful use of amplification devices, assaults and disturbances of the peace are not protected by the First Amendment. When appropriate, the City Attorney's Office may be contacted concerning First Amendment issues.

(6) Police Response

a. Spontaneous Events or Incidents:

1. **Rescue:** The rescue of endangered innocent citizens or officers is a priority. The Incident Commander and/or supervisors must take necessary steps to effect the rescue of trapped or endangered officers and citizens. Once accomplished, police personnel may be directed out of the immediate area if their numbers are insufficient to maintain control of a given crowd. Effective police action will be taken as soon as adequate resources are available.

2. **Isolation:** A perimeter to contain the incident shall be established as soon as possible.

The Incident Commander and supervisors will ensure that responding officers have clear ingress and egress. Clear instructions will be given via police radio to responding personnel. Depending on the circumstances, both inner and outer perimeters may be established.

a Officers posted on perimeters must be given clear instructions regarding:

1. The movement of vehicles and pedestrians
2. Whether persons will be allowed to leave the secured area via a designated route or method
3. How and where individuals or groups are to be evacuated

b Ensure that sufficient resources (personnel, barricades, crime scene tape, etc.) are on hand to maintain the integrity of a perimeter. Do not initially establish a perimeter so large that it cannot be secured. As additional resources become available, the perimeter may be expanded.

3. **Communication with participants:** In some crowd situations, contact with formal or informal leaders can be established, either in person or by amplification. Police personnel shall not penetrate an obviously hostile crowd solely for the purpose of communication. When possible, clear instructions shall be communicated to the crowd. Unless there is an immediate risk to public safety, or significant property damage is occurring, sufficient

time will be allowed for a crowd to comply with police commands before action is taken. The Incident Commander and supervisors are responsible to ensure that all orders given to a crowd are consistent, lawful, and appropriate for the circumstances. Lower ranking officers may also issue individual orders, consistent with the orders of the Incident Commander, to ensure the immediate protection of themselves, others, or property.

4. Intelligence: Observation posts may be established at the discretion of the Incident Commander and supervisors. In addition, plainclothes officers may be used to assess the overall behavior and disposition of a crowd.

5. Control/Enforcement Actions: The Incident Commander shall make the final decision as to what control action, if any, will be taken to address a given crowd situation. The police response will be appropriate for the degree of violence, disorder, criminal conduct, and perceived threat to public safety, order maintenance, life, and property. Crowd size and available department resources will also factor into the police response. Uncoordinated actions or actions by individual officers shall be avoided. The below listed factors will be considered prior to determining a course of action.

b Will police action likely improve the situation?

c Will targeting specific violent or disruptive individuals for arrest be more effective or appropriate than applying control tactics to the entire crowd?

d Are sufficient resources available to effectively manage the incident (personnel, tear gas, scout cars, etc.)?

e Have clear and secure escape routes been established for both the crowd and the police?

f Has communication been established with the crowd (loudspeaker, personal contact, etc.)?

g Have backup plans been considered in the event initial police efforts are ineffective?

h What less-lethal crowd dispersal options consistent with the Use of Force policy are available?

(7) Scheduled Special Event or a planned special event involving potentially large crowds, the police department will:

a. Planning: Upon notification, develop an action plan at the earliest possible time. The police department's plan shall include input and participation from all affected districts, bureaus, and units. This plan will be a written document approved by the Division Chief

of the affected division. Coordination of efforts is essential. A written event plan shall be completed and distributed to the affected districts, bureaus, units, and outside agencies well in advance of the event. The following factors will be considered and addressed by personnel developing the action plan for a large crowd event. Information gathering is essential.

b. What type of event is to occur? Parade, concert, sporting event, community gathering, protest, etc.?

c. Identity of the organizers. What is their past record of conduct (peaceful, violent, cooperative, etc.)?

d. Will outsiders visibly and/or physically oppose the planned event?

e. Will the event involve the use or abuse of alcohol or other substances

f. Where is the event to occur? Consider the size, location, ingress, and egress points.

g. What is the optimal site for a command post as well as a staging area should personnel be needed to quell a disturbance or control the crowd.

h. Have the appropriate permits been issued?

i. Have other agencies, bureaus and divisions been notified and included in the planning process (paramedics, fire department, communications bureau, etc.)?

j. Will the EOC be needed?

k. Will off-duty personnel be involved? Has the commander of off-duty personnel been made part of the planning process?

l. Is it possible and appropriate to coordinate with group organizers and explain the police department's mission, preparation and potential responses? Information considered sensitive or confidential shall not be released to group organizers if it will jeopardize the safety or effectiveness of police personnel.

m. Have the proper number of personnel been scheduled to safely handle the event? Should a reserve force be available?

n. Has an enforcement policy been formulated and communicated to affected personnel?

o. Training: When practical and appropriate, personnel preparing for a large event with

the potential for violence shall be retrained, to include physically practicing various aspects of crowd management. Topics may include but are not limited to Field Force, Mobile Field Force, mass arrest procedures, functioning in a tear gas environment, use of non-lethal weapons, applicable ordinances and statutes, protected speech, etc. Drills may be scheduled to measure the effectiveness of assigned personnel. The results will assist in structuring or revising future training.

p. Briefing Report: A written briefing document will be prepared, detailing the objectives of the operation, radio talk-groups, IC and CP telephone numbers, etc. Personnel shall be briefed on their particular assignments before deployment. Instructions shall be communicated to all officers so that confusion is minimized. Information shall be shared with police personnel as far as possible. Specific instructions covering topics such as applicable laws, community concerns, appropriate enforcement actions, chain of command, tactics, traffic patterns, etc., shall be clearly presented to officers. The duties and responsibilities of personnel staffing the command post or OEM shall be defined and communicated. Duplication of efforts and the resulting confusion are to be avoided. Personnel shall be given the necessary authority to carry out their respective missions. Conflicting orders and violations of established lines of authority are to be avoided.

q. Deployment: Personnel shall be deployed to their posts or staging areas with sufficient time before the start of the scheduled event. Supervisors shall ensure that their personnel are punctual and properly equipped. Equipment considerations may include portable radios, batons, mace, helmets, face shields, etc. Supervisors shall also ensure that their personnel are relieved at appropriate intervals.

r. Communication: Sufficient radio talk groups will be dedicated to the event. The Communications Bureau must be included in the planning process, and a determination will be made as to whether a dispatcher will manage or monitor.

s. Talk Groups: Commanders and supervisors shall ensure beforehand that all radios are equipped with the necessary talk groups. Assisting agencies with a need to communicate on Denver Police channels may be issued radios on an as-needed basis.

t. Scenario Options: Personnel creating a plan to address a large crowd event should anticipate a variety of scenarios and devise a police response for each. Such scenarios and responses should be made part of the final plan and communicated to the affected personnel. Consideration should be given to potential worst-case situations.

u. Response to outbreaks of violence or disorder: The same considerations listed in the spontaneous event section shall apply to outbreaks of violence and disorder at scheduled events. The overall Incident Commander shall have the final decision as to what level of police intervention is employed to address a large scale outbreak of violence or disorder.

This shall not preclude actions consistent with orders of the Incident Commander taken by individual commanders, supervisors, and officers to defend themselves or others from imminent harm.

(8) Crowd Control Methods

a. Preferred Response: The preferred police response is one of management rather than control. Nevertheless, control plans should be in place with the option of immediate application if the need arises.

b. Tactics: The following tactics are authorized to address crowd control situations. The general order of application is fluid (escalation and de-escalation) and will change based on the control required, consistent with the department policy of using the minimal police intervention needed to address a crowd management issue.

1. Isolation of the crowd
2. Display of police officers (forceful presence)
3. Order for crowd to disperse
4. Selective arrests
5. Multiple arrests
6. Dispersal (Field Force, Mobile Field Force), tear gas, less-lethal weapons

c. Delineation: Lines of demarcation between authorized and unauthorized civilian areas should be established.

d. Isolation of the crowd: To the degree possible, inner and outer perimeters will be established to isolate the crowd from other geographic areas, persons and vehicle traffic.

e. Assignments: Generally, officers should be assigned to squads of sufficient size to be effective. At larger events, the crowd can be divided into quadrants with a commander in charge of each one.

f. Display of Police Officers: Once this tactic is selected, officers should be assembled in formation at a location outside the view of the crowd. The formation may be moved as a unit to an area within the crowd's view.

1. This tactic should not be used unless there are sufficient personnel to follow through with dispersal. Do not bluff a crowd.

2. If a display of police officers combined with a dispersal order is not effective, more forceful actions may be employed.

g. Orders to Disperse: A loudspeaker or public address system should always be used to increase the likelihood that all crowd members can hear police commands. It is recognized that some crowds are so noisy that loudspeakers may be ineffective. When confronting an unlawful or dangerous crowd, orders to disperse should be made. An order to disperse should not be made unless supported by an applicable municipal ordinance or state statute. The order should be publicly announced as follows:

"I am (name and rank) of the Denver Police Department. All persons assembled are in violation of (City ordinance or state statute -- stated in general terms). In the name of the people of the City and County of Denver, I command all of you to disperse. Failure to disperse will subject each of you to arrest and prosecution. The time is ..." (Message does not have to be verbatim)

Establishing points of ingress and egress are essential for the safe and efficient dispersal of crowds. Once dispersal begins, the IC and supervisors must ensure, if at all possible, that clear instructions are given to crowd participants regarding their movements. It is recognized that some crowds may be so violent or uncooperative that clear communication as well as points of egress cannot be established.

h. Arrests:

1. When the only violation present is unlawful assembly, the crowd should be given an opportunity to disperse rather than face arrest. The IC should make an effort to communicate with crowd leaders to explain the violation(s) being committed. If the unlawful behavior is corrected and the Incident Commander is satisfied that there is no longer a threat to public safety, no further action may be necessary.
2. When arrests are necessary, the IC shall ensure that sufficient numbers of police officers are on hand to effect individual or multiple arrests. This tactic can be effective in dispersing the remaining crowd members. Incident Commanders must use discretion in committing arrest teams to penetrate hostile crowds. The safety of police personnel must be considered.

i. Dispersal: The following physical tactics can be employed individually or in combination, to disperse a crowd. The order of application is fluid, (escalation and de-escalation), and will change based on the control required, consistent with the department policy of using the minimal police intervention needed to address a crowd management issue.

A staging area must be established and officers must function as a team under the control of the Incident Commander. The mission is to disperse the crowd as safely as possible. Dispersal tactics may include:

1. Skirmish line (Field Force)
2. Deployment of tear gas
3. Deployment of less-lethal (pepper ball, bean bag, M-26 Taser, etc.)
4. Mobile Field Force

(9) Reporting

The Incident Commander shall ensure that an After Action report is completed for either a planned or spontaneous event, in addition to any other required reports, (Use of Force, Employee Injury, etc.). The Incident Commander shall also ensure that superiors are notified of the incident in a timely manner. The severity and swiftness of the event may dictate when this can be accomplished.

(10) The Denver Police Department's Crowd Control Manual can be found attached to Department Directive 04-05 for further tactics and strategies.

Gerald Whitman
Chief of Police
Denver Police Department
1331 Cherokee Street
Denver, CO 80204

Last Updated: 01/08/2008